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643 The struggle for dynastic power is apparent in the economic field.
652 The control over the wealth and the potential resources of the country,
661 though not exclusively the king's, is yet sufficiently his to render his economic position unassailable. The king of Nupe derived his income firstly from the taxes and tributes which his officers collected, and of which he received the largest share, and secondly, from the wars and raids which the king's armies carried into foreign lands. The king's private estates constituted a third important source of income. These estates were worked by slaves who lived in small hamlets on the royal lands called *esoži*. We shall discuss the organization—past and present—of these royal estates later, in the chapter on land tenure. Here we need only say that not all the Emirs of Nupe were equally keen farmers; some, *Etsu* Mohamadu for example, let things drift; they took little interest in their estates, neglected their *esoži*, and cared only about the regular payments of their share in the yield of the farms.

Other sources of income are less clearly defined—profits made from commerce (above all, from slave-trade), in which an *Etsu* Nupe, like every Nupe nobleman, might sometimes engage; or proceeds from bribes, extortion, and the confiscation of estates belonging to rebels and other 'enemies of the country'. One interesting variety of this latter kind is the exploitation of a religious institution, a 'king's cult' of comparatively recent origin, the anti-witchcraft society which is known in [575] Nupe as the *ndakó gboyá*. The Fulani Emirs had ingeniously grasped the control over this powerful and lucrative secret society and shared the proceeds with its members; the share of *Etsu* Bello in one year is said to have amounted to over £100.[1]

643 Another source of income, which will gain the economist's special
652 appreciation, lay in the royal monopoly of the kola-nut trade. You will find to-day two kinds of kola-nuts on the markets of Nupe (or for that
655 matter Nigeria): the small cheap kind, which is imported from the Gold Coast and Southern Nigeria, and the large, most expensive kola-nut
439 which is grown in Nupe country, on the farms of the kola-nut planters
661 of Laboži. Till the days of British rule this latter kind, famous all over Nigeria, could be procured only by the members of the nobility; no commoner or peasant had any opportunity of obtaining Laboži nuts. The trade in these nuts was a strict monopoly of the *Etsu* Nupe, the kola-nut growers being forbidden to sell their crop to anyone except his own agents.[2] Stories are current of traders smuggling the precious fruits out of Laboži by night, lest they should be seen and caught by the men of the king. In the kola-nut monopoly an instrument of sharp class-prerogative was cleverly combined with an efficient economic measure.[3] But to what extent the *Etsu* Nupe disposed of the kola-nuts as gifts to his courtiers and favourites, and to what extent he made money by selling them to the nobility of the country, I am unable to say.

[1] See p. 142 and *Africa*, 4, 1935.

[2] The *Etsu* Nupe in turn supplied the kola-nut planters with slaves to help [782 them in their work. In pre-Fulani days the kings of Nupe are reported also to 567] have presented one slave every year to Laboži to be sacrificed in the annual ritual with which the Laboži planters secured the thriving of their crop.

[3] See p. 129.

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There is little to be said about fowls. In every house chickens are kept; men and women, grown-ups and children, have their own chicken. Often one sees a young boy going to the market to sell 'his' chicken, given him by father or mother. The fowls are bought and sold regularly in the food-markets of every larger village. Fowls represent the most important sacrificial food of pagan (and to some extent Mohammedan) Nupe; almost every religious ceremony, communal as well as household-rites, involves the killing of a fowl. Chickens are, besides, the most desirable food the Nupe know. Eggs are not marketed and in certain parts of Nupe not eaten. The Beni do not eat eggs because 'they make men sterile and women barren'. The Nupe also keep pigeons, for which they put up a bowl of water on a forked pole inside the house. Pigeons are not as a rule traded in the market, nor are they eaten regularly, but sometimes the eating of pigeons is ordered by diviners for ritual reasons.

Donkeys and Horses

About three-quarters of the donkeys which are found in Nupe belong to Bida town. They are transport animals owned mostly by traders, pack animals used in their caravans which carry palm-oil and salt from the river steamers up country, and bring natron down from Hausa and Bornu. In 1935 the only districts possessing no donkeys were those which have other means of transport: the riverain area, and the district of Mokwa through which the railway runs. Again, the largest number of horses is found in Bida. Horses, as I have said already, are a symbol of rank and status. The *Etsu* Nupe may, as a sign of his highest esteem, present a man with a horse. But every man who can afford it will buy one for himself or for his sons. A horse represents, if not the most profitable, the most noble expenditure or investment.

Yet, profitable in the narrow sense, or in the wider sense as implying enhancement of prestige—all these possibilities of investment of capital in live stock are determined by the amount of liquid capital available; in other words, by the volume of money in circulation. The economic stringency of the country which, starting from the decline in the market prices for native produce in 1934–5, as well as the subsequent recovery in 1936, is reflected clearly in the figures of the census of live stock for Bida Division for the last four years.

	Sheep	*Goats*	*Horses*	*Donkeys*
1933 . .	5,788	28,856	1,196	111
1934 . .	6,600	29,445	1,160	157
1935 . .	5,010	25,876	917	137
1936 . .	5,702	34,751	1,007	149

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245 539 up.' She went and told the men of the house. They all came and looked. They cleared the ground around the young plants; they had two kola-nut trees then. After three years the trees bore fruit. The men picked the fruits and took them home. They broke the nuts open and ate them. They picked out the kernel, took it into the bush and planted it. When the kola-nut trees bore fruit again the men picked the fruits and took them to the king. This was the beginning of the kola-nut in Nupe. When they had taken the fruits to the king, he said: 'They are very nice indeed.' But the following year the trees did not bear fruit. So the men went to see the soothsayers. They said that the trees would not bear fruit again unless they sacrificed a human being. So the men went and told the king, and said: 'If we do not sacrifice a human being our trees will never bear fruit again.' Therefore the king gave them permission to take a human being and sacrifice it. They did so, and the trees bore fruit again. This was the beginning of human sacrifices in Nupe, with the permission of the king.

245 As the legend explains the origin of kola plantation in the country of the Kusopa, certain magic rites which are practised by that group—and by that group only—emphasize the unique position of the kola-nut planters. Only with the knowledge of that special magic can the success of the difficult and precarious cultivation be assured. The Laboži people practise two kinds of this professional magic. At the time when the kola trees are in bloom every planter will collect the dead leaves on his plantation, place them in a mortar, and pound and then burn them on the plantation. There is no spell or special ritual linked with this act, but by it, as by a magic act, the planter believes he will ensure a rich harvest. The second magic connected with kola-nut planting is performed for the whole group by the *Maji Tsuba*, the Master of Threshing (in the legend the first kola-nuts were growing from the threshing-ground), the village priest of Laboži. Annually, about two months before the picking of the [782] kola-nuts, he performs a sacrifice in front of the hut in which, as the legend has it, the woman lies buried to whom the Kusopa owe the knowledge of kola-nut planting. To-day a white ram and cock are sacrificed, the blood together with some beer is poured on the threshold of the hut, and *Soko*, God, is invoked that he may let the kola trees thrive. Formerly this sacrifice is said to have demanded a human victim. (See p. 90, n. 2.)

This connexion between planting technique and mythical and magic ideas, common all the world over, needs no special explanation. But in the case of the kola-nut planters it gains an additional significance. The special nature of the rite, its infrequent occurrence, correspond to the special monopolized technique. In the eyes of the people who, not kola-nut planters themselves, accept the existence of these special rites, it confirms and endorses the exceptional position of the Kusopa as the masters of a unique craft. About fifteen years ago the Administration planned to introduce the cultivation of kola-nuts into the other districts of Nupe. A few expert planters from Laboži were sent round to teach the farmers in places where the soil looked promising the almost secret art of kola planting. These efforts met with but meagre success. Local conditions were to a large extent responsible: the soil in the other districts seemed capable of producing only the inferior kind of kola, and

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1. Sacrifice before twin shrine

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2. The sacred crocodile of Mokwa

[p. 22(A)]

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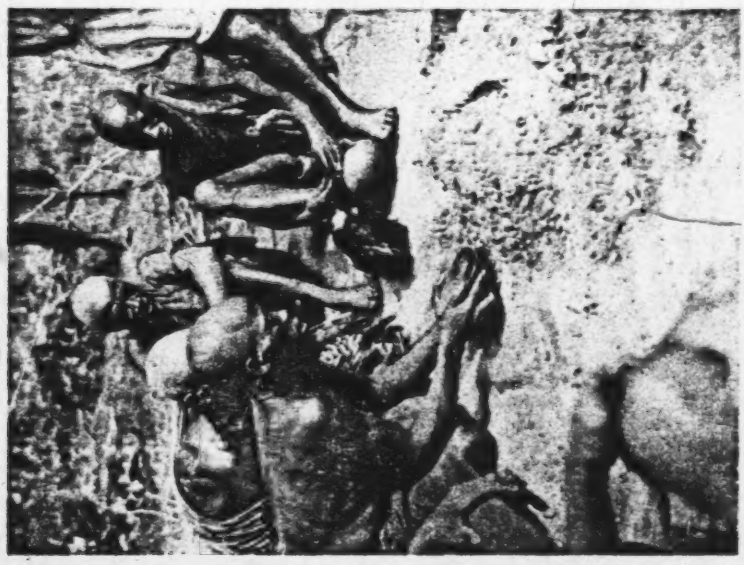
7. *Nddduma* sacrifice on the Niger

[142]



6. *Žiba* sacrifice

[p. 38(R)]

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8. Scene from *gunnu* dance in Jebba

[415]

9. *Dzabó* sacrifice
[p. 70 (A)]

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the freshly cut grain eaten in certain sacrifices points to subsistence and the continuation of fertility which the ritual is meant to secure. The meaning of all these symbols is fairly obvious and in a sense 'natural', being based on a commonly known nexus between the sign and the thing signified. Symbols of a more artificial kind, resting on some specific and perhaps esoteric convention, are rare in Nupe ritual. The only clear instance is the symbolism of right and left in the *dzakó*, which, as I have said, has no parallel in any other Nupe cult. The sacrifice of fish in one version of the *gunnu* is a more doubtful case; for though fish are associated with fertility (in dream interpretation) and welcome gifts (in divining), that knowledge is far from general. The use of tortoise shells in the same ceremonial reminds the congregation of the Father Tortoise stories, but does no more. The rule that the *Ndazo* must not wear anything 'tied round his waist' evokes no association, say, with constraint inimical to growth and fertility. And though it may be tempting to speculate on the rule of calling the sacrificial beer 'water', that is, by the name of the fluid which (as rain or semen) is linked with the fertility of nature and man, the Nupe attach no ulterior meaning to this metaphor.

Whether these and other details of the ritual procedure do not perhaps involve symbolisms of a more subtle and unconscious nature, I will not discuss. In my view uncomprehended 'symbols have no part in social enquiry; their social effectiveness lies in their capacity to indicate, and if they indicate nothing to the actors, they are, from our point of view, irrelevant and indeed no longer symbols (whatever their significance for the psychologist or psycho-analyst). But let us note that certain modes of acting may be significant for the actors without constituting symbols, merely because they represent a rule, a formalism of acting, that is, a *ritual*, and not accidental or random behaviour. This is true, for example, of the choice of the sacrificial animals. To begin with, they are in every case 'ordinary' animals, without sacred associations and neither rare nor avoided in workaday life. Though most rituals prescribe the sex of the sacrificial beast, males and females are chosen in random manner, suggestive of no symbolic link with the purpose of the ritual. The *ketsá* is perhaps the clearest example; the legend, as we remember, mentions the sacrifice of a cow; yet the actual ritual, when performed at the request of the Kede chief, requires the killing of a bull. In other rituals the sex as well as the species of the animal simply depend on the outcome of divination. It might seem that at least the specification of white or black animals, which is fairly common, must have a symbolic significance since black colour is generally associated with secrecy and evil things, and white colour with prosperity.

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prosperity. But again, both kinds are irregularly employed; all that can be said is that the sex, colour or species of the animals is *laid down*, and hence stands for a rule significant as such.

A few words must here be said about the whole conception of the Nupe sacrifice. It seems anomalous that a non-personified deity or an abstract 'cosmic force' should be offered food and drink. But the prayer formula accompanying the offering speaks concretely of 'giving' these to God or *kuti*, just as the name of at least one ritual implies that the *kuti* (or the stone representing it) 'drinks' the fluid offered. The name for sacrifice, *labá*, offers no further clue; denoting the actual offering as well as the prayer accompanying it, it does not separate the former from the general act of worship. The offering is thus a gesture among others: like the prayer formula, meant to break through the aloofness of the deity, the sacrificial gift serves to attract and hold his attention. In either case the gesture used is borrowed from everyday life, the prayer employing ordinary language, the sacrifice items normally offered by clients to patrons. And this conception of a 'normal' gift is once more consistent with the notion that the various *kuti*, precisely like persons of rank and standing, command their special 'greetings'. If the offerings are anomalous, they share this character with all the other forms of addressing God and *kuti* and indeed with the very conceptions of the deity and of the Force-that-is-in-ritual.

Let me note briefly that the same anomaly also holds in the case of sacrifices made to ancestors or over the vessels of 'great' medicines. The former, as we remember, are brought to the disembodied souls which are 'with God'; mostly, too, they are accompanied by invocations addressed at once to God and *kuci*. The sacrifices to medicines again involve the invocation of God; and though they consist in offerings of beer, morsels of food, and the blood of the sacrificial animal, they are, as we shall see, also understood to strengthen the impersonal force that is imputed to the substance of medicine. Nor are the offerings to spirits, de-humanized beings that they are, any less anomalous; indeed, in a different context I recorded the positive assertion that 'spirits do not eat'.

The first two observances may, like ritual proper, include the sacrificial meal of the congregation; the sacrifice to ancestors does so in most cases, the sacrifice to 'great' medicines only where it has fused with a *kuti* or with *kuci* worship. Invariably, however, the inclusion of the communal meal, even where it means merely a sharing-out of beer, entails the invocation of God, and not only of ancestors or of the 'force' of medicine. Yet the sacrificial meal has in no way the significance of a sacrament. The meal undoubtedly represents a sacred occasion, although it may show

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little trace of awe or emotional thrill.[1] But there is no conception of consuming things sacred in themselves and hence of sharing bodily a token of divinity. The crucial aspect of the sacrificial meal lies in the fact that here God and his worshippers eat and drink together; and if this is a symbolic act, its symbolism merely points to, and confirms, the 'fellowship and mutual social obligations' between deity and congregation. Much the same point was made by Robertson Smith in his discussion of the ancient semitic sacrifice, and I can do no better than quote from him: 'The one thing directly expressed in the sacrificial meal is that the god and his worshippers are *commensals*, but every other point in their mutual relations is included in what this involves. Those who sit at meat together are united for all social effects; those who do not eat together are aliens to one another, without fellowship in religion and without reciprocal social duties'.[2]

Here we are no longer dealing with symbols in the strict sense of the word but with a new type of significance, bearing on things of very general social import and established by means of a relevant parallelism between the form of ritual and the norms governing social relationships. Before turning to this aspect let me mention another border zone of symbolism in ritual, where the symbolic function of modes of acting overlaps with their direct, causal, efficacy. The modes of acting, in other words, both 'point to' a state of affairs relevant to the aims of the ritual, and also cause this state of affairs to materialize. The instance I have in mind is the sexual taboo of the *gunnu*, followed by a period of licence. The fact that normal sexual relations are first suspended and afterwards conspicuously resumed must clearly focus attention upon sex and procreation, and upon the sequence of 'end' and 'new beginning'; so that this rule of acting comes to symbolize the central theme of the cult. Equally, however, the prohibition, rendered more severe by the provocation of the 'mixed dance', and its subsequent lifting produce both tensions and catharsis, and generally add to the stimulations generated in the ritual: and in this sense they simply engineer or create the required mood and expectations.

Generally speaking, then, strict (and comprehended) symbolism plays no great part in Nupe ceremonial. In a different sense, however, all ceremonials operate with modes of acting which 'point beyond themselves' in a manner analogous to signs or symbols. They no longer serve merely as 'reminders', nor do they bear upon

[1] This is borne out by the usual translation of the Nupe word *biki* into Hausa-Arabic; using the latter phraseology the Nupe would speak of *walima*, 'sacred feast'.

[2] *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, 1907, p. 269.

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Gbari FF23
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26. A *bori* dancer in a cataleptic fit

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G
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27. *Sogba* sacrifice of the Gwari

[p. 214 (B)]

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771 the same lack of congeniality also characterizes the practices
177 which have been rejected. Or shall we assume that, for the
adoption to occur, the pre-existing interest must have outweighed
• 782 the uncongenial character, while in the case of rejected practices
the balance was the other way? There is evidence for this. The *gani*, with all its alien elements, clearly answers powerful pre-existing interests, and indeed improves upon the respective traditional institutions; the *gugu*, conversely, has nothing of the kind to offer: it is only another fixed ritual, duplicating the aims of the traditional rites, so that, apart from being uncongenial in form, it also appears redundant in content. The *bori* could answer at least a weak pre-existing need, since it offers a cure for lunacy of which the Nupe are deficient; yet it also clashes utterly with their religious beliefs and, above all, with the psychological tenor of their religious life. The *sogba* cult seems to exemplify this balance between interest and congeniality even more clearly. For the Nupe adopted only that aspect of it which corresponds to a strongly pronounced and in a sense inexhaustible interest (in fecundity), while rejecting both the annual ceremonial, whose aims seem redundant, and the *sogba* ordeal, which was altogether alien to the pre-existing aims or interests. Much the same is true of the bronze figures of Tsoede, which were embodied in Nupe ritual only as emblems of kingship, without any of the features normally implicit in the worship of 'idols'.

Let us be clear that this assessment of a balance between interests and congeniality holds only with two provisos. First, it is largely based on *ex post facto* arguments. The *gani*, for example, fits a 'pre-existing need' only in the form in which it exists today. If we judge this affinity of interest to be sufficiently great to have outweighed the uncongenial features we do so because in the event the latter proved no insuperable obstacle; but we cannot be certain how much remodelling, of content and purpose as well as of form, has gone into the acceptance. Nor can we say that the *bori* or *gugu* would have proved incapable of such remodelling. All we can really say is that no such attempts have been made. Have they not been made because there was no sufficiently strong interest to make the effort worthwhile? Again we can only answer—perhaps; for the *elo* would seem to contradict this argument. There, an uncongenial practice has been fitted into Nupe life for no apparent 'need' at all, unless we are prepared to consider the addition of a pleasurable (and novel) occasion a felt 'need'. And if we do so, the mummery of the *gugu* and the unusual dance of the *bori* would seem similarly acceptable.

Secondly, our arguments hold only if other factors in the situation can safely be neglected; and of one of these, the relationship

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between the potential donors and recipients, this cannot be assumed *ab initio*. Rather, this factor must be added as a likely third determinant of adoption or rejection. Surveying our data from this new angle we meet with a wide variety of situations. The *elo*, the Tsoede 'idols', and the *sogba* cult were adopted strictly from outside, without any corresponding fusion or integration of the 'owners' with the recipient groups. But here a further distinction must be drawn: while the Tsoede idols and the *elo* were taken over from fully distinct and in fact unknown donors, the *sogba* was found among neighbours and was 'taken over' only in the sense in which people turn to some promising, if otherwise unfamiliar, place of pilgrimage. Furthermore, the 'owners' of the *sogba* cult, viewed with Nupe eyes, occupied the inferior position of a conquered 'slave' population. Perhaps, then, the barrier of status was readily overcome only in the case of the fertility ritual, with its strong affinity of interest, while in the case of the other aspects of the cult it added to the 'counter-pulls' which made for their rejection.

The *gani*, *gugu*, and *bori* represent observances adopted or rejected in circumstances which involved the fusion or integration of donor and recipient groups. But again, the conditions differ in relevant respects. The Bornu and Yoruba immigrants arrived *en bloc*, maintained themselves as compact groups, and were thus integrated, as segments, in the host communities; the Hausa colony in the cosmopolitan city grew haphazardly, as the result of the irregular immigration of individuals of all classes and occupations, and never achieved internal cohesion; it only fused amorphously with the host community, but was not integrated in it. The kind of adoption, therefore, which turned the *gani* into a 'sectional task' was neither feasible nor called for in the case of the *bori*. It might, on the other hand, conceivably have worked in the case of the Yoruba ritual, even though this cult answers no 'residual' need. But here we must consider that the Yoruba came to Nupe, not as immigrants claiming equal status (as did the Benu), nor yet as free immigrants, but as prisoners of war freed and settled by royal command. Whatever the effect of the other 'pulls' in this rank-conscious society, the barrier of status must have weighed heavily on the side of rejection. Admittedly, it did so effectively only as regards the cult as such; minor features, such as the dress of the dancers which reappears in the *elo*, were adopted across the barrier, for their aesthetic attraction and novelty. Yet the barrier has at least prevented this 'borrowing' being acknowledged.

In brief, the acceptance or rejection of the alien observances involves the efficacy of several conditions and results from their

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794 The daily prayers (*salla*) spoken in Arabic (which few understand) and the weekly service in the mosque (*aduwa*) have become fully part of Nupe life, and if they lack the stimulus of pressing needs or the thrill that goes with rare occasions, this is not felt or ever commented upon. But the Moslem observances have also been remodelled, partly in a revolutionary fashion. As they exist today, they afford expression to the same pressing anxieties which animate the pagan rites, and do so with the same persuasiveness of a direct, articulate appeal to the deity. Over and above the stereotyped prayers, the Nupe have others which ask for special benefits and are meant to take care of such contingencies as a drought or the threat of an epidemic. These prayers may be said both privately, by any family head for his household, and publicly, in the mosque, by the *Liman* on behalf of the whole community. The special prayers are always said after the regular ones and, most important of all, are spoken in Nupe, not in Arabic. In addition, any household or kin group which faces some deep anxiety or threat will arrange a *walima*, that is, a ceremonial meal at which a fowl is killed and a mallam, specially invited, utters a brief prayer; again, an invocation in Nupe follows the Arabic formula, so that this observance differs only in minor details from the communal meal of the pagan ceremonial.[1]

794 782 Let me here quote four Nupe-Mohammedan prayers, concerned with harvest and rain. They have been recorded in two different places, Bida and Lemu, and show the familiar looseness and variability of phrasing, which no orthodox Moslem prayer ever permits; above all, they invoke *Sokó*, not *Allah*, and thus wholly recapture the content and style of the pagan invocations.

Prayer at Harvest time (*Bida*).

Lord God (*Tsoci*), protect the house from the dangers of the harvest season, such as fire, such as falling ill with fever, such as drought. Give us health, *Amin*.

The same (*Lemu*).

The harvest is cleared: *Sokó*, protect us from fire; *Sokó*, protect us from smallpox; *Sokó* protect us from the heat that dries up everything.

Prayer at the Beginning of the Rains (*Bida*).

Sokó, may he give rain in plenty. May he give food that thrives beautifully. The grain, may it thrive beautifully. *Sokó*, send us

[1] The Nupe would in fact say that *walima* is only the 'Mohammedan name' for the ceremonial which the 'pagans' know as *bikó* (See above, p. 110.)

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water which falls down upon man. And the man who is in a canoe on the water, and the water in the bush, protect them also for all of us.

The same (*Lemu*).

Lord God, protect us from the danger which is in the rain, and the storms, and also the lightning. Protect the house from it. Give us health, *Amin*.

3. CEREMONIALS

We turn to the big religious feasts of Islam which, in their annual recurrence at least, should come closest to, or rival most fully, the fixed pagan ceremonials. Of the seven orthodox Moslem festivals, the Nupe celebrate only three: the Mohammedan New Year, *Muharram*, and the two feasts known in Arabic countries as *Id el Fitr* and *Id el Azha*, the former concluding the month of *Ramadhan*, the latter falling in the 'month of pilgrimage', at the end of the Mohammedan year.[1] The Nupe call the Moslem New Year's feast *navũ* or 'Torches', and name the first month of the year after it; the month of *Ramadhan* is called *etswa azũ*, 'Month of the Fast', and the feast which succeeds it *sallagi* or 'Little Feast' (lit. 'prayer'); the *Id el Azha*, also known in Arabic as *Id el Kibir*, Great Feast, is called *sallakó*, which has the same meaning. The months in which these two feasts fall, the 10th and 12th, respectively, are known by their names.[2] Let us note that in embracing only three of the festivities of Islam the Nupe have retained that 'normal level' of regular ceremonials which we could discern in their traditional religious life.[3]

In all Moslem countries the purely festive aspects of the *Id* tend to outshine the strictly religious ones. These are represented in a religious service held in the open, attended by vast crowds and led by the *Imam*; in the generous giving of alms; and (on the 'Great Feast') in the sacrifice of an 'unblemished animal . . . to commemorate the name of God over the brute beasts which He has

[1] A third, the Birthday of the Prophet, is identified by the Nupe with the *gani* ceremonial, as we have seen, on very little evidence. (See above, p. 217).

[2] These dates correspond to general Moslem practice. But the correspondence is purely nominal since the Nupe calendar operates with the intercalation of a 13th month while the Moslem calendar keeps strictly to the lunar year. In consequence the Nupe feasts always fall roughly in the same season while the orthodox Moslem celebrations correspond in no way to a seasonal calendar.

[3] See pp. 70, 225. This applies only to communities fully Islamized; in a first phase, one of the Mohammedan feasts, the *navũ*, may simply be added to the pagan cycle of rites (see below, p. 244).

LEGAL PROCEDURE

627 The village head has limited and informal judicial powers. Minor cases are settled by him with two or three members of the council and the elders of the ward to which the litigant belongs. The procedure is informal and discussion rarely becomes heated. The authority of these courts is gradually being surrendered to the officially recognized courts. Cases requiring formal justice are referred to the
671 Native Court under the professional Moslem judge (*Alkali*) of the District.
692 In modern Nupe, Moslem law is paramount; the judges (pl. *Alkalai*) reside in Bida and the other Districts. The Bida town court is both a local court and appeal court for the Districts. The *Etsu* and his councillors form a higher court of appeal for cases concerned with land.

671 A marked disparity has been reported between Moslem law and the traditional
182 culture, particularly in rural communities, where the social and economic conditions differ most widely from the social life of which Moslem law is an expression. Peasants who were familiar with and understood the old customary law, often insist, when they come before the courts, on being accompanied by a mallam or person of standing who is familiar with the " new " law.

Among the Kyedye the *Alkali* holds his court in Muregi; the *Kuta* (chief) and delegates (district heads) have no judicial authority.

692 Jurisdiction over grave crimes was formerly the responsibility of the *Etsu*
696 Nupe. The death penalty was exacted for theft in the night, " big theft," murder, and treason. Traditionally the only villages in which executions could be performed were the *ledu* (pl. *leduzhi*) villages—Jebba, Gbere, Tada, Jiragi, Sulati, Fofo, Taiji, and Cewuru, which lie along the banks of the Niger 10 to 15 miles apart, between Jebba in the north and Eggan in the south. The king's hangmen resided here and a criminal was generally taken for execution to the *ledu* village nearest to his home.

778 Each of these villages possesses a " chain of Tsoede," generally kept at the
●782 chief's house; it is a typical heavy iron slave or prison chain, up to 30 ft. long, with arm- and leg-irons. Traditional sacrifices of beer and blood are made to it, and it protects the village from sickness and brings fertility to women. Jebba and Tada, the oldest of the *leduzhi*, also possess bronze figures.[27]

INHERITANCE

428 The personal property of men is inherited by their sons, that of women by their daughters. The family farm goes to the relative next in seniority, younger brother or eldest son, in the classificatory sense.[28]

586 A widow may be inherited by her husband's sister's son or her husband's younger brother; custom forbids remarriage with an elder brother. Islam, however, allows remarriage with elder or younger brother.[29]

LAND TENURE

423 Land tenure in different parts of the country has been variously affected by two factors, namely the appropriation as estates held by the nobility of parts of the tribal lands after the Fulani conquest, and the density of population.

The royal house of Bida holds the title to certain lands by right of conquest. Land was also bestowed on others by the royal house for services rendered, and all individual titles to land are held to be ultimately derived from this one source. The clearing and first hoeing of the royal estates is done by large-scale communal labour. The subsequent work was formerly done by slaves, but to-day by paid labour.

Most of the appropriation of land occurred in the area east of the Kaduna River. Here population is more dense and there is a complex system of land ownership and transfer. Owing to the consequent shortage, disputes are frequent and particu-

[27] Nadel, 1942, pp. 56–8, 165–79; 1940a, p. 181; 1935b.
[28] Nadel, 1942, pp. 31–2, 245.
[29] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 249–50.

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

CULTS[1]

Certain cults and rituals are peculiar to particular Nupe sub-tribes.

794 782 The Ebe have a *šikinta* masked hunting ritual, which is associated with the ancestral spirits and may be performed to remedy sickness or barrenness; the Gbedye have the masked rituals known as *elo* and *mamma*, while the Benu, although professing Islam, perform a *gani* masked ceremony in which many characteristic features of the *gunnu* cult have been incorporated. The Kusopa offer sacrifices to a mythical ancestor of *kola-nut* planting; the Dibo also have an ancestor cult, the rites for which are performed in the now deserted town of Forgwe in Abuja Emirate, where the ancestral graves are. Another form of ancestor cult, *gugu*, derived from the Yoruba *egungun*, is performed at funerals by the Konú of Kutigi town, who were originally Yoruba slaves.

The Kyedye, although now strongly Moslem, and other riverain groups such as the Bataci and the Kakanda, have cults concerned with water and fishing. These include *ndáduma*, in which annual sacrifices are made to the spirits of the river to ensure and limit the annual flood, and *ketsá* in which sacrifices to the spirit of a large rock in mid-stream near Jebba are made to cure illness and bring good fortune in fishing. The chains of Tsoede, which may be used as instruments of ordeal, are also the centre of numerous sacrificial rites. In the Kyedye villages of Giragi and Fofo sacrifices are offered to protect the village from sickness and to bring fertility and prosperity. Usually performed in December at the time of the Niger's second flood, and in February before the start of the fishing season, they are repeated later as a kind of "harvest thanksgiving," when palm-oil and beer are poured over the chain. Each village has a priest whose duty it is to safeguard the chain and make sacrifices to it.

The gunnu cult[2]

794 793 The *gunnu* cult, the most vital religious cult in Nupe, is concerned with fertility, crops, health, and general prosperity. It is performed both on fixed dates and in times of misfortune such as drought, epidemics, failure of crops, etc. It is common to all sections of Nupe, though according to legend it originated among the Beni, but is not necessarily enacted on the same date by all. The date chosen is generally one of three: the fifth month, the beginning of the harvest of early bulrush millet; the ninth month, the beginning of the guinea-corn harvest; or the 13th month, the end of the dry season. Rites are generally performed towards the end of the month, when the moon rises late. There is a *gunnu* priest in each community who is called *ndazó* or *gunnukó*. There are drummers everywhere, but the ritual dress, sacrificial food, and the duration of taboos vary from section to section. The performance is in three parts: the first performed at night by boys and men; the second next morning when there is a sacrifice and communal meal and short dance by the men —this part is secret; the third part consists of a general dance by men and women performed later on the same day.

MEDICINES[3]

278 789 Medicine (*cigbe*) is regarded as an important means of contending with the power of evil, though it may serve both good and evil ends. Rituals or cults are regarded as, in a sense, a delegation of God's power in compensation for his remoteness, and are in the hands of sub-tribes or villages. Medicines, on the other hand, are, except in aberrant form, in the hands of individual practitioners and put to use for individuals.

Nupe medicines are concoctions of roots and other ingredients which may have to be found under particular circumstances or treated in a particular way, used

[1] Nadel, 1942, pp. 23–5; 1940a; Temple, 1919, pp. 113, 331–3; Notes on Kede District, 1950.

[2] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 77–84; see also Nadel, 1937a, for details of the ritual and a study of its significance.

[3] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 17–21, 132–62 and *passim*.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
FF52 Nupe FF52

sons, his whole brothers, and his daughters in a fixed and decreasing proportion. If the children are infants the money is held in trust for them by the brothers of the deceased. A woman's money is inherited in the same way, but either sex may leave their money as they choose, by declaring their wishes in the presence of a large number of responsible witnesses. If there is no family, a woman may inherit from her husband, and in some cases where there are no children, and she is known to have been a specially good wife, the brothers of the deceased forego their right in her favour. If she has no children her property goes to her husband. In no case does an illegitimate child inherit.

In old times the people did not dare live outside walled villages, but the neighbouring lands were apportioned by the village-head amongst the various heads of families, according to the amount he and his could beneficially occupy. The family-head in his turn granted the right of occupancy to individuals of his family, and, as no tree was of value before the virgin forest was cleared, each occupant had also the right to the sylvan produce of his land. As, however, virgin forest diminished and land became less plentiful, the heads reserved the use of the oil-palm to themselves, though at one time they held it in trust for the Emir.

Land cannot be sold, but it may be redistributed either on the migration of the holder, or on the extinction of the whole family. The village-head has a right to ask the family-head to give him back some land that he may grant it to a new comer, always supposing that this land is not at the time fully occupied. The right of occupancy passes on the death of the holder to the successive head of the family.

Amongst the pagan Nupe* the guardian spirit "Gunu" is worshipped. Sheep, dogs and fowls are sacrificed in his honour, their blood being poured out as a libation to him, whilst their flesh is consumed by the worshippers. Every eleven months the men go to his altar, beneath which sacred relics have been buried since time immemorial, where they kneel down in a wide circle, joining hands, and bowing their foreheads to the ground. The Elders address the spirit, and a feast and special dance follows. Other festivals are held at harvest time, and on the appointment of a new head-man, each village head-man being also village priest. There is a semi-religious institution called "Ndakogboiya." A meeting is held at the Chief's house, when a man may complain of his wife's conduct and beg that she may be taken to task, together with any other ill-doer. A man then mounts on stilts, and appears amongst the people after dark, proclaiming their evil deeds, and receiving propitiatory

* Sapke and Mokwa.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

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(a stone), in commemoration of the legend. Only a man who lives by the river and is a canoe-man can be a Kede. The men never marry outside the clan, though the women will sometimes do so. They keep very much to themselves, and no stranger was permitted to enter the town of Pojo, not even the Emir of Bida, whose suzerainty they recognised.

They are pagans and pray to gods or departed spirits in the rivers. Many hundreds of men will enter the water together and gaze into it, for hours and even days together, while they make prayer. They say that a race of people inhabit the rivers, that they are very fine people, but small, and that they have power over all things in the water. The Kede are great swimmers, and can see things in the water that are hidden from other men. For instance, a girl at Egga, who was bathing in the early morning, in company with many others, was caught in an eddy and disappeared. People searched for her body all day, but they could not find it. They summoned a Kede from Pojo. He arrived the following morning and brought her body to the surface in half an hour. Her hands and feet were locked, so that no one could unclench them, and her mouth was tightly shut. She was laid in a hut and the people gathered round her and mourned her, for they believed her to be dead. The Kede man told them that she was not dead, and he had her carried to his house, where he gave her medicines, and in three days she was well.

The Bangawa are a riverain section, practising the trade of canoe-men and fishermen in the Bida Emirate. Their Nupe origin is disputed.

There is a Haussa tribe of the same name, who came from Katsina, but it is unlikely that there is any connection between them and the Nupe off-set.

In Lapai Emirate the Bata tribe number some 5,000 to 6,000. They are an agricultural people and collect sylvan produce, i.e., shea-nuts and palm kernels, from which they extract oil. The only industry extensively practised is weaving. Their Sarakuna form a judicial council, presided over by a head-man, which is directly responsible to the Emir.

The Batachi are a riverain section in the Bida Emirate. The name means "talaka," and is descriptive of their social position towards the Nupe.

The Bini section are the aboriginal occupants of Bida. Their other principal towns are Doko, Eyagi, Tua, Pichi and Wuya. The name Bini signifies, "he who opens his mouth fully to speak the truth." They are a pagan race, and practised their rites on the Hill of Tua some three or four miles out of Bida town. The sacrifice of a black ox, etc., was part of the formula, and the dead were buried in pots at the base of the hill. These practices were put an end to by the father of the present Emir of Bida. The Bini are fast dying out There are two sub-sections,

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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and believed to procure, and at the same time to keep within limits, the annual flooding of the Niger. The second ritual is the *Ketsá*, a sacrifice to the spirit of the huge rock of the same name which rises abruptly from midstream near Jebba (known to Europeans as Juju-rock); this sacrifice is believed to cure illness and barrenness and to secure luck in fishing or trade. The third ritual is the sacrifice to the *Chain of Tsoede*, a sacred relic which secures fertility, prevents illness, and is also used as an instrument of ordeal.

Now, these three rituals also occur among the Kede; the first two have in fact been, as it were, usurped by them, and made to some extent their own concern. The Kede chief holds himself responsible for certain special, most conspicuous, performances of these river ceremonies. Once a year a special *Ndádduma* is performed in a place called Bazumagi, north of Jebba, the *Kuta* himself providing the sacrificial food, a white bull and honey. Unlike the local *Ndádduma* rituals, the *Ndádduma* of Bazumagi is enacted on behalf, not of a particular village, but of the whole population of the river valley. The chief's *Ndádduma* also shows another feature which is absent in the local rite: the priest climbs a rock in midstream and throws a stone towards the bank; the spot where the stone falls is believed to mark the line to which the river will rise that year. The *Ketsá* becomes a chief's ritual at the appointment of a new *Kuta*. About one month after his accession the new chief sends a bull (preferably white) to Jebba Island to be sacrificed there by the local priest, again on behalf of the whole riverain community, to inaugurate and secure a prosperous reign. A special *Chain of Tsoede* finally is kept in Muregi, in the house of one of the chief's councillors (see p. 176). He performs the annual sacrifice of beer and the blood of a sheep, beer and animal being again provided by the *Kuta* himself.

It is interesting to note that in none of these rituals may the *Kuta* or any member of his family be present. Thus the double nature of these rites, which, though stamped chief's rituals, are essentially rituals of the *kintsozi*, is conspicuously symbolized. The interests which they voice—the securing of safety and livelihood to the people on the river—are adopted and made their own by the Kede rulers. A single belief and a common cult comprise both rulers and ruled, notwithstanding the religious barriers which otherwise separate the two, and add to the political dependence of the *kintsozi* another, spiritual, dependence.

9:Nadel E-5 (1934-1935) 1935 FF52 Nupe FF52

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ORIGINAL ARTICLES.

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131 **The King's Hangman: a judicial organization in Central Nigeria.** *By Dr. S. F. Nadel.*

Travelling on the Niger in Nupe country, between Jebba in the North and Eggā in the South, one comes across a certain group of villages, curiously distinguished from the rest of the riverain villages by the special name which the Nupe have for them: they call them *ledu*, in the plural *leduzhi*, which means, literally, 'prison.' 143

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778 693 [562] The common name stands for a common organization to which they all belong. And as an apt symbol for an organization expressed by such a name each of these villages possesses the same emblem: a sacred iron chain (fig. 2). As a rule this chain is kept in the chief's house, and only very reluctantly would he show it as in fig. 4. At any rate, he would always make sure first that no woman (the anthropologist's wife included) is near the place when he brings it out into the daylight—for no woman is allowed to set eyes on this sacred implement. It is a heavy iron chain, often some 30 feet long, with strong leg- and arm-irons on it—what we should call a typical slave- or prison-chain. It is kept rolled up in a round wooden tray; but in one place, at Jebba, I found a railway wheel serving this purpose. The chain will always smell abominably, and will be covered with flies, the ●[782] unmistakable sign that the traditional sacrifice of beer, and blood of fowl, has been performed properly.

There exist altogether eight such *ledu* villages. They are distributed along the Niger banks in a surprisingly regular manner, always between 10 to 15 miles apart from one another. The names of the *ledu* villages, from north to south, are as follows: Jebba, Gbere (fig. 1), Tada, Jiragi, Sūlati, [103] Fofo, Tayi, Cewuru. Two *ledu* villages, Jebba and Tada—an offshoot of Jebba—possess, besides the chains, sacred bronze figures (fig. 3) which signify that these two villages are the 'old ones,' the heads [532] of the *ledu* organization. The chain itself is called *égbā Tsoede*—the 'chain of Tsoede'—and chains and figures are said to have been brought to these places by the mythical ancestor of Nupe kingdom, Tsoede.[1]

173 The many versions of the Tsoede tradition which exist in Nupe country differ in details only. The main facts are always the same: Tsoede was a Nupe man, who was sent as slave to the Atta (king) of Idah, at the time when the Nupe were tributary to Idah. From a slave Tsoede soon became the Atta's favourite and friend. Presented by the Atta with slaves, wealth and powerful magic, but envied by the Atta's relatives, he had to flee from Idah after the Atta's death. In a magical bronze canoe, one of the Atta's presents, he paddled up the Niger and finally reached Nupe country. Here he settled down, and amongst the people of his country he distributed his wealth, the insignia of his rulership, and the emblems of his powerful magic. Very soon he delivered Nupe country from

[1] According to Nupe etymology the name Tsoede is derived from *Etsu Ede*, or *'tsu Ede*, *i.e.*, king Ede. This explains the other name by which the culture hero of the Nupe is also known, *Edegi*.